

Economic Support Technical Advisory Committee Updates
December 4, 2002

Income Maintenance (DHFS)

1. Dane County presented an overview of their proposed “change center” to members of the Income Maintenance Advisory Committee this past month. Dane County has modeled their change center after Milwaukee County’s. The change center is envisioned to be implemented in January of 2003. The center will handle most case changes (income, assets, addresses, household composition, etc.) for all Economic Support programs except for W-2. Several other counties (Outagamie and La Crosse) are also considering implementing change centers in their agencies in coming months. A Statewide ad-hoc committee is meeting to discuss the possibility of using change centers on a local, regional, or statewide basis for the future.
2. The State also presented information on SeniorCare application processing technology and the potential of using the concept of scanned application processing for other Economic Support programs. Brainstorming on this idea suggested that family medicaid cases and WHEAP applications might be the first two programs to consider using scanning technology to save staff time. The State would scan applications in Madison and then electronically send them to an “in basket” for the respective county. Test piloting this option for family medicaid cases and WHEAP applications was discussed as a possible next step.
3. The Family Planning Waiver will begin January 1, 2003 with Economic Support staff receiving State training on this program in January and early February. An operations memo on this subject will be issued during the month of December.
4. The Income Maintenance Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, December 18th in Waukesha County with DHFS officials to complete strategic planning for 2003. Goals and objectives for the year will be defined and IMAC subcommittees will be assigned work tasks to meet the year’s goals and objectives. IMAC has already proposed hosting another workload symposium in 2003. The symposium would review the progress made on the 20 tasks identified at last year’s workload reduction symposium, provide for Statewide discussion on change centers, and further explore ways to use technology in case processing (like seniorcare scanning of applications).

W-2 (DWD)

1. An emergency ad-hoc subcommittee of WCHSA and WCA officials continues to meet and work with DWD and DHFS officials to mitigate the concerns raised in implementing RMS. The ad-hoc committee presently consists of Mary Kennedy (Calumet County), John Chrest (Wood County), Richard Kammerud (Polk County), John Rathman (Outagamie County) and Sarah Diedrick (WCA). The committee is presently working with DWD and DHFS officials to implement a transition plan where counties will be allowed to run their existing cost allocation and reimbursement systems while the new RMS system is implemented and tested. At the present time, State officials will only give us the first quarter of 2003 to run dual systems and resolve problems with RMS or implement alternative solutions that meet Federal cost allocation

requirements. It is envisioned that a RMS letter will be sent out to all counties on this topic in the next week. A face to face meeting is also being planned of the ad hoc committee for later this month. A lot of work will need to be accomplished in a rather short period of time to meet these aggressive goals and timelines. One of the reasons cited for the short window is the fact that the Federal government won't reimburse State or local entities for dual cost allocation systems. In addition, the State has only limited financial resources to fund any funding differences that might result from RMS as compared to existing systems.

2. The State continues to work on WorkSET, the computer system that will replace work programs in CARES. (This would affect W-2, FSET, and Child Care as the present system is proposed). The State anticipates that WorkSET could be implemented sometime as early as late 2003. In light of this new information, local agencies continue to feel that this is the perfect time to try to get the Child Care program moved to DHFS since there would be considerable cost savings in doing so. If Child Care stays integrated with Food Stamps and Medicaid, a large amount of computer programming time could be eliminated, staff time is saved not having to double entry case changes, and in some cases client convenience is greatly enhanced in only having to go to one agency location rather than two to get needed benefits. There are a lot more child care clients receiving food stamps and medicaid than clients receiving child care and W-2. WCA has incorporated the recommendation of moving Child Care and Emergency Assistance to DHFS in their budget platform and WCHSA's vision committee has incorporated this into their work. Any official correspondence and action from WCHSA supporting this recommendation would also be greatly appreciated.

3. The Department of Workforce Development reviewed highlights of their budget proposal with members of CIC this past month. Numerous concerns were raised about the drastic and dramatic cuts to emergency assistance (likely eliminates the entire program), job access loans, transportation dollars, WAA, social services block grant, and other cuts to nutrition programs, the immunization program, and to child welfare services. We have already begun working with WCA on our concerns in regard to these TANF cuts and the negative consequences they would have on W-2 and other low-income families we serve. An financial analysis of the proposed cuts to SFY03 is attached to this report. Official correspondence and action from WCHSA and WCA opposing these TANF cuts would be appreciated.

4. Members of CIC, especially the members of the performance standards and contracting subcommittees, have been working tirelessly to obtain some modifications to the W-2 performance standards of Earnings Gain, Assessment, Extensions, and entered employments. While DWD staff have proposed a draft memo addressing some of these standards, they have stated that they will not act on this topic and will simply forward their recommendations to the new administration for action. An official WCHSA ES TAC recommendation on the performance standards is attached to this report. We would appreciate official WCHSA action on adopting the recommendation of removing the Earnings Gain, Assessment, and Extension standards from the performance standards and making them information only. In addition, the entered employment standard should be adjusted downward to reflect the effects of the current economic recession.